PRACTICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Volume 2 March-April 1955 Number 2

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EDITORIAL REMARKS

Obstacles and Opportunities for Christian Anthropologists

Christian professional anthropologists are rare. Unfortunate as this may be, there are good reasons. For one thing anthropologists are rather few in numbers compared to other major scientific groups. Correspondingly, the field is relatively unknown to lay people and scholars in several other fields; and when it is known its content and aims are usually not well understood. In introductory courses and books anthropologists usually feel called upon to devote considerable time to explaining what anthropology is and does, a necessity which does not so handicap most other disciplines. It is understandable that Christians should feel little urge to enter a field of study which seems as remote from the vital issues of living as anthropology sometimes does. One of the biggest tasks for the Christian professional anthropologist in the near future is the demonstration of anthropology's relevance to Christianity.

Another reason why evangelical Christians may avoid entering anthropology has to do with the basic philosophical orientations which dominate much of anthropological thinking. In physical anthropology it is the idea of evolution; in cultural anthropology it is the doctrine of cultural (and moral) relativism. The prominence of these doctrines understandably causes some to look upon anthropology as incurably anti-Christian. It is interesting that, though anthropology has an almost completely secular history, it has become what may be that discipline (outside of Biblical-theological studies) which is most relevant to Christian life and service. A Christian anthropology is definitely possible.

A Christian anthropologist of recognized accomplishment has a unique opportunity to serve Christian causes both as a writer and as a teacher in secular institutions of learning and research. He can have an influence for good on students and in general contribute to the correction of erroneous views which may be advanced by other

anthropologists. Presumably a sufficiently large block of capable and respected anthropologists within an organization such as the American Anthropological Association could have a telling influence.

It is also worth mentioning that Christian anthropologists can contribute to the correction of certain erroneous and harmful beliefs held by some Christians, such as the idea that Western civilization is in every respect superior to non-Western culture.

The most significant area of Christian endeavor to which the anthropologist can contribute is missions. Missions is world wide in scope, and so is anthropology. Missions must be concerned with culturally diverse peoples, and it is largely the comparison of culturally diverse societies which gives anthropology its uniqueness and value as a science of human behavior. A missionary can maintain a superb devotional life and possess an unusual mastery of Bible and theology, yet fail because of lack of understanding of the people he works with. It happens all the time.

Relatively few Christian schools offer courses in anthropology. Here, nevertheless, is another potential area of service for the Christian anthropologist as a teacher and writer. Here, especially is opportunity to assist in the preparation of missionaries.

The opportunities for employment of Christian anthropologists by both secular and Christian organizations are, at present, limited. Presumably the Christian anthropologist may have difficulty acquiring and maintaining a position in a secular university because of Christian beliefs and practices which are deemed to run counter to the traditions of objectivity and relativism in anthropology. Even more important, however, is the high level of training required for a professional anthropologist. No one can be a top anthropologist who has not had field experience with alien cultures, and it may be said that one must have a Ph.D. or its equivalent to teach anthropology in a university. This field experience is frequently costly and

otherwise difficult to come by, but it is a requirement for the degree. Because of the unavailability of highly trained Christian anthropologists Christian organizations who desire one may have to accept one without a Ph.D. On the other hand, virtually no Christian organizations have positions for full time anthropologists at present. With little opportunity for employment by secular organizations before earning a Ph.D. and with the lack of openings with Christian organizations the Christian who desires to become a professional anthropologist must find funds to see him through several years of graduate work or resign himself to hoeing a hard row. A number who have started this course have fallen by the wayside because of the peculiar difficulties involved.

Anthropological training for missionaries is of sufficient immediate importance that Christian schools should plan to employ anthropology teachers with master's degrees. Little of this is likely in the immediate future, but it is a goal to work toward. It would result in an immediate increase in anthropological training for missionary candidates and provide employment and teaching experience for Christians working in the direction of the Ph.D.

The Christian who feels constrained to become a professional anthropologist should realize the difficulties involved and prepare for them in advance. If funds are unavailable he may be able to prepare himself for public school teaching with a view to pursuing part time graduate work. Or, he may be able to prepare himself to enter some remunerative nonacademic occupation which will enable him to save to finance his training. He must be prepared to accept a lower standard of living if he feels that it is sufficiently valuable for Christian endeavor that he become an anthropologist. It is important to realize that one cannot depend on anthropological employment to see him through until he earns the doctor's degree. But with this necessity for taking detours one must guard against getting so far from the main road that he can't get back on.

There is another factor which must not be ignored. The Christian who plans to enter anthropology must be mentally and spiritually prepared to withstand the impact of continual exposure to philosophies which are opposed to his Christian beliefs and his way of life. Constant exposure, for example to the extreme forms of cultural relativism cannot fail to be disturbing. Anthropology is anything but a greenhouse atmosphere for the Christian, for many of the most acute areas of conflict between secular scientific philosophy and Christianity are centered in anthropology. This is one of the main reasons we need Christians in this area; we must not abandon the field to non-Christians. Aside from this, however, anthropology is rich in relevance to Christian life. The important thing is for one to be sure he is willing and able to weather the blast of secularism to which he will be exposed during his anthropological training. It is simply another aspect of counting the cost.

With all these difficulties facing the would-be Christian professional anthropologist one may well ask whether the effort is worth it. It certainly is! The needs are great and the opportunities are increasing. Anthropology is a rapidly growing field. With training completed there is increasing opportunity for employment in secular institutions of learning and in the vigorous young field of applied anthropology. There are increasing signs that in the very near future there will be employment for Christian anthropologists as such.

Several years ago Dr. George R. Horner, now of Boston University, suggested to some mission boards that there are three ways in which applied anthropology can make a contribution to the missionary effort. One has to do with training missionary candidates to become properly sensitive to native peoples. He estimated that adequate training in anthropology and linguistics could add several years of effective service to the professional life of the missionary. Today, however, only one evangelical school offers a full course of study in anthropology, though more and more are adding introductory or missionary anthropology courses.

This area remains one of unrealized potential. If all Christian schools which prepare people for missionary service could appreciate the value of anthropological training for missions they would find fewer valid reasons for defering the employment of a Christian anthropologist. The demonstration of the value of anthropology for missions is one of the immediate tasks of Christian anthropologists. Christian schools operating on limited budgets cannot be expected to expand in an area which appears to them to be of only limited value in terms of their objectives.

A second way that an anthropologist can serve missions, Horner suggested, is as an anthropological consultant or advisor employed by mission boards on a full time basis. I am not prepared to say to what extent anything like this has been done.

The third suggestion was the employment of Christian anthropologists to pursue field studies for mission groups. The studies would be of two kinds, advance study of cultures as yet unreached by the mission and shorter special studies of cultures already undergoing change due to missionary effort. Both would provide valuable information needed by mission administrators in formulating policy and missionaries in dealing with the people more successfully.

Two tests of the consultant and field study recommendations as applied to evangelical missionary work recently have been made, one in Ecuador and one in Argentina. In both areas Mr. and Mrs. William Reyburn undertook linguistic and ethnological field studies at the request of the missions and consulted with the missionaries concerning their problems. Early reports by missionaries are enthusiastically favorable. Mr. Reyburn reports very definite interest in similar studies on the part of other mission organizations in that part of the world and proposes what he refers to as an "Anthropological Mission" to meet this interest. It looks as though the Reyburns have provided a practical demonstration of the value of the anthropological approach in missions, and as others hear of it we may expect opportunities of this sort for the Christian

anthropologist to open up. Mr. Reyburn indicates that qualified Christian anthropologists will be needed in the immediate future to meet the demand for work of the kind the Reyburn's have been doing for the last two years. Other mission groups already have expressed an interest in this. The organizations who would be interested in employing an anthropologist to do field studies would desire, of course, those who have the training and experience which indicates that they have the disposition and ability to work successfully in field situations to obtain the kind of information the missionary groups need. A Ph.D. may not be required, necessarily, if experience is adequate. The question is, "Where are the properly qualified Christian anthropologists to meet the opportunity which apparently lies before us?"

This Issue's Contributors

Eugene A. Nida, the author of the article, is Secretary for Translations with the American Bible Society. He is well known as author of several books; some technical, such as the widely used textbook, Morphology, and others popular, such as God's Word in Man's Language. His recent Customs and Cultures is reviewed in this issue. Dr. Nida also has worked with Wycliffe Bible Translators for a number of years, and taught anthropology and linguistics at the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Mrs. Milton Gabler, author of the review, is with the Wycliffe Bible Translators at Sulphur Springs, Arkansas, where she served with her husband in the development of the Wycliffe Home there for several years before he went to be with the Lord last year. Mr. Gabler taught anthropology at the Summer Institute of Linguistics and wrote the Outline of Ethnology for use in the courses there.

The Reyburn Report

The report on the work of Dr. and Mrs. Reyburn among the Toba of Argentina will be published by the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. Arrangements for the subscribers to this journal are still uncertain, but this valuable paper will be available for those who want it, at least.

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

Eugene A. Nida

A missionary in the Sudan was trying to get a word for the "cross." He pointed to the constellation of the Southern Cross and asked his informant for the name. Immediately he began to proclaim what he thought was the gospel of the cross of Jesus Christ, but actually he was extolling the virtues of the "catfish," for the indigenous name for the Southern Cross was the catfish.

This fundamental type of mistake has been repeated on numerous occasions and in many different parts of the world, for it is the most common cultural error, namely, assuming universal validity for our own distinctive "traits," whether they are linguistic, material, social, religious, or esthetic.

Why Do People Fail to Communicate?

Failure to communicate reflects primarily one basic mistake: assuming that our own culture is correct and superior and that others are mistaken and inferior. It is for this reason that missionaries often fail to write distinctions between sounds which the indigenous language possesses and which the people insist must be differentiated in orthography. If the missionary does not hear the difference or finds it awkward to write it on his typewriter, he is very likely to argue that it should not be written, for it just "clutters up" the alphabet. Of course, the fact that he, as a speaker and user of English, has learned to employ such a very clumsy and inefficient system of spelling tends to make him impatient with those who would like to construct an alphabet which would be more accurate.

There are, on the other hand, a number of practical adaptations in the use of phonemic alphabets, for the science of graphemics (visual symbolization of speech) is based on somewhat different premises. Nevertheless, to a very great extent failure to acquire and to speak correctly

the language of another people is due to a mistaken view of culture.

Complaints about a language having too few generic terms and too many specific terms reflects primarily upon the foreigner's failure to appreciate the cultural relevance of the features which are symbolized by the words in question. In the Anuak language of the Sudan there are eight distinct words for different methods and stages of grinding corn, while there is only one word for any kind of a metal tool. For the average speaker of English the reverse proportion would be true. This difference is not, however, the basis for condemning one or another culture, but rather for obtaining clues as to relevance which tools and corn meal have in the two cultures.

Some people are perfectly willing to employ the sounds and words of a language but they object to following the syntactic patterns. They continue to think in their mother tongue, while using the words of the foreign language. This is a very "natural" thing to do, for it conforms to our unreasoned ethnocentrism.

Communication is essentially a two-way road. There is no communication without sharing, no getting across of new ideas without being willing to employ the different linguistic forms without the use of which one only makes noises, but does not communicate.

Communicating Effectively Through Words

Words can be avenues as well as barriers for communication. Rev. Efrain Alphonse of Panama saw in the Valiente practice of washing clothes in the stream and then keeping them in special baskets the parallel to sanctification, which he rendered as "to be washed and kept clean." He realized that the Valiente expression of "mind engraver" was excellent for "teacher" and that "that which will become worm food" was ideal for "sown in corruption" (I Cor. 15:42).

Other persons, however, have sometimes failed to communicate. One missionary insisted that in translating "Holy Spirit" he should use a term which meant primarily the ghost of a departed ancestor. It was his conviction that he could "Christianize" the word by teaching. Among a very small nucleus of devoted followers he was able to use this term with a degree of intelligibility, but these people included a number of persons who had been largely "detribalized" both socially and emotionally. They were able to adjust themselves more readily to the basically foreign concept. The missionary judged that because of the insight which these people seemed to show they were spiritual. But most of the rest rejected his admonition to let the "ghost of an ancestor live within them." Without a doubt the Holy Spirit had operated within the lives of those who genuinely desired to serve God, but their experience was more in spite of the misleading terminology, rather than because of it. I think that it is a fair comment to say that the more one investigates translations of Scripture into aboriginal languages, the more one is impressed with the work of the Holy Spirit, for it is surely not by virtue of the clarity of some translations that people are led into the degree of light which their lives exhibit.

Communicating Effectively Through Syntax

A really good translation—and there are many good ones —does not by virtue of its grammatical form give the slightest impression that it is a translation. The long, involved sentences of the Pauline Epistles are cut up into "natural" lengths (that is, natural for the language in question, not for Greek, for Paul wrote very typical Greek sentences). If passive constructions are preferred to active ones (as is the case in the Nilotic languages), then such shifts in construction are made. If the indigenous language begins almost every sentence with "and" or some other conjunction, the translator is in no difficulty, for almost every Greek sentence begins with a connective. But if such connectives are not generally employed, he simply omits them where they are not necessary. To translate all the "and's" of the original (where because of their

frequency they mean little or nothing) would be to mistranslate in a language which uses such connectives only very rarely.

The tendency to impose our syntax upon other languages constitutes perhaps the principle reason for people's difficulty in understanding the Scriptures. It is not unusual for people to explain that in order to understand the Scriptures they must read them in some trade language, such as English, French, or Spanish, (which they understand only imperfectly), for in those languages the meaning is clearer than in translations published in their own mother tongue, which they use constantly. The reason for this is often that in the trade language the words follow the syntactic patterns of the language, but in the translation into the aboriginal tongue the translator has forced the language by employing a multitude of word-for-word renderings.

Communicating Effectively Through Figures of Speech

Figures of speech are expressions which have a meaning which is not precisely the sum total of the meanings of the words which make up the phrase. If we say "a cat with nine lives" or a Spaniard talks about "a cat with seven lives," neither of us really means that cats have more than one life. We are only commenting upon their presumed extraordinary ability to extricate themselves from danger. In most languages, however, such a phrase would be either meaningless or imply an utterly false statement.

All this is perfectly clear when we are speaking about ordinary idioms, but when we approach the problem of communicating the ideas of the Scriptures, there is a tendency to feel that figures of speech must be preserved regardless of whether they mean anything or even if they mean something quite opposite from what was intended. "He lifted up his eyes" means in Turkish only that he picked his eyes up off of a table. "It came to pass" is utterly unintelligibel in Nuer, a language of the Sudan, and "opened his mouth and taught the people" seems quite ludicrous to many

peoples, for they cannot imagine how a person could teach with his mouth open.

On the other hand, any one who communicates effectively in other languages must make use of indigenous figures of speech. In Shilluk, a Nilotic language of the Sudan, the word for "fellowship" means primarily "to eat out of the same dish." Such a term is quite appropriate. The Uduks, who live in the Sudan near Ethiopia, speak of reconciliation as "meaning snapping fingers again," for instead of shaking hands they snap each others fingers.

It seems that most people are reconciled to translating nonmetaphors in Greek by metaphors in other languages, but they hesitate to change Biblical metaphors--even such a theologically insignificant one as "an eye of a needle." However, the Kekchi of Guatemala must speak of "the face of the needle"; the Lahu of southeast Asia call it "the nostril of the needle"; the Haka Chins of Burma refer to it as "the mouth of the needle"; and the Tiddims, also of Burma, can only say "the ear of the needle." In all these expressions the words differ, but the meaning is essentially the same. That is to say, the form of the message differs but the content is precisely equivalent.

What is one to do, however, with expressions which are regarded as having great theological importance, e.g. "in Christ." In some languages this has been translated literally, even though it only means "in the stomach of Christ." In other languages the functional equivalent is "with Christ," since only by the preposition "with" can one convey the meaning of intimate association which is suggested by the Greek "in."

It must be recognized that in any communication from one language to another something is bound to be lost, for no two languages have exact sets of equivalences. On the other hand, there are often gains. The Greek makes no distinction between inclusive and exclusive first person plural (i.e. we meaning the speaker and those spoken to and we meaning the speaker and others, but not those spoken to).

A language which makes such distinctions shows a gain in communication, for it makes for greater clarity and exactness.

In the Marshallese language of the South Pacific the phrase "under the law" has quite a different meaning from what it has in English and Greek. For the Marshallese people it implies something illegal, a kind of transaction "under the table," as we say. If one is to communicate correctly in Marshallese it is necessary to abandon the Biblical idiom and say, "you are not required to do what the law says" (Galatians 5:18).

The Gospel of John is often regarded as a favorite book, and there are many good reasons why this is true--at least for us. However, the form of writing is so abstract that in a number of other languages many passages are relatively meaningless--that is to say, they do not communicate. The verse "I am the way, the truth and life" (John 14:6) is filled for us with rich meaning and associations, for we can equate persons and abstractions. But in some languages this verse means nothing more than "I am a trail, a true saying, and I am alive." This is the most meaning which the verse can have if it is translated more or less word-for-word. If we are to communicate the significance of this verse in some languages we must say for the first expression "I am the one who makes the path for you to travel" or "you can follow me," in the sense that He has gone ahead and hence we can proceed because of Him. The words "I am...the truth" must often be rendered "I speak the true word," for a person cannot be equated with an abstraction such as truth, but he can speak it. "I am...life" certainly means more than "I am alive." As is made clear from many contexts in John, the "life" of the Son of man was a life which he imparted to others, i.e. "He made people live." Hence, this verse may be rendered, "I make the path for you; I speak the true word, I make people to live." This may not impress us as being as "meaningful as the rendering with which we are familiar, but in other languages it does approximate the real significance of this verse, while a literal rendering is often hopelessly inadequate.

Any effective cultural contact must be within the framework of the culture if it is to have relevance to the people. Communication is no exception to this rule. In fact, perhaps more than in any other phase of culture, communication, which depends for its significance upon a highly complex system of linguistic symbols, must employ such symbols with the fullest regard for their idiomatic functioning.

One Missionary's Opinion

"...I can only say that I wish I had had more knowledge of the significance of the native customs when I first went to work among the Lambas: I should have been saved from many a grievous mistake and many a misjudgment. The ability to see through Bantu eyes will give the missionary and the official better understanding and more sympathy with the people, and a greater ability to gain their confidence."

—C. M. Doke, a Baptist missionary; p. 9 in The Lambas, of Northern Rhodesia.

REVIEW

Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions. Eugene A. Nida. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954. 298 pp. $4.00.

Customs and Cultures makes fascinating reading not only for the missionary and prospective missionary but also for anyone even mildly interested in anthropology or missions or both. Nothing else like it exists.

This is serious business with Nida: "During some ten years as Secretary for Translations of the American Bible Society, I have become increasingly conscious of the tragic mistakes in cultural orientation which not only express themselves directly and indirectly in translations of the Scriptures but in the general pattern of missionary work."

Some perhaps will be "shocked" from the first paragraph of the book to the last, but maybe it is a good thing to shock some of the "shockability" out of us. Nida's treatment is frank, to the point, and necessarily at times, critical. The book is geared to the popular audience by avoiding technical language in favor of "plain English," and like a good preacher Nida illustrates his "sermon" with countless first hand illustrations without prefacing them with an apologetic "Pardon a personal illustration."

In brief Nida's observation is that too many missionaries take for granted that Western Culture is part of Christianity and that it should be imposed lock, stock, and barrel on peoples all over the world. This is nothing but "ethnocentric pride."

"Perhaps the attitude of one Mennonite missionary best expresses the sane and sensible approach. She was asked by a devout friend in a church at home, "My sister, do you teach the doctrine of the plain clothes?" To which the missionary replied, "Why we are fortunate if they wear any clothes." P. 3.

The "fundamental thesis" as to the meaning and function of missions which underlies all 10 chapters of the book we quote briefly:

"The message of Christian Missions has three fundamental aspects: (1) it must be a message for all of life, for there is no phase which can be rightfully excluded from the all-embracing demands of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. (2) it must be understood by living men and women in terms of the only way of life which they know, namely their own, and (3) it must permit the Holy Spirit to work out in the lives of the people those forms of Christian expression which are in accordance with their distinctive qualities." P. 23.

Customs and Cultures by and large follows the routine anthropological presentation--first discussing culture in general and then in succeeding chapters dealing with material, social, religious, esthetic, and linguistic phases of culture. Each of these phases is summed up in its relation to Christian Missions. The ninth chapter deals with the factors of cultural change, and the last chapter suggests solutions to age old problems. "Practical suggestions concerning ways in which missionaries may acquire helpful anthropological background and field data" are contained in the appendix.

Some of the interesting and thought-provoking statements and illustrations contained in the various chapters of the book are as follows:

Chapter One - Shocks and Surprises

"One Liberian chief announced his intention to become a Christian, but it was not long before it was discovered that the chief was tired of polygamy, and the only legal way he could see to divorce twenty-two of his twenty-three wives was to become a Christian." P. 20.

Chapter Two - Rhyme and Reason

"Accordingly, when a Japanese exclaims over a picture of a Japanese girl, 'How lovely, she looks just like anyone!' this is not an insult." P. 36.

"The Christian position is not one of static conformance to dead rules, but of dynamic obedience to a living God." P. 52.

Chapter Three - Race and Ranting

"Of another outstanding missionary in Africa it was said, 'Our brother's skin may be white, but his heart is as black as any of ours' - a compliment of the highest order, for he was a brother under the skin." P. 67.

"The fundamental rule for dealing with racial problems is to treat people as people." P. 71.

Chapter Four - Hoes and Headaches

"One cannot establish a simple one-to-one correspondence between the advantages of the physical environment and the complexity of any and all phases of the culture." P. 80.

"It has been entirely too easy to divorce the message of Christianity from the material culture by concentrating on heaven and leaving the earth to take care of itself. P. 90.

Chapter Five - Friends and Frustrations

"Under this setup it is not uncommon for members to arrange to be caught doing lesser sins, in order that they may not be penalized for major sins which they contemplate committing during their period of excommunication." P. 130.

"The Great Commission and the history of Christendom both point clearly to the necessity of proclaiming the Good News, but neither in Scripture nor in the historical development of the Church does the gospel include the details of social structure or church organization." P. 133.

Chapter Six - Devils and Doubts

"Throughout the history of Christendom, beginning with the opposition of the Roman state, Christians have had to face uncompromisingly the implications of the absolute and exclusive demands of Christ. Anything less than this strikes at the very heart of Christian theology." P. 139.

"The funeral may take place in a local Roman Catholic chapel, and if the family has enough money a band may be hired. One such band in Morelos used to play "Yes We Have No Bananas" and "Happy Days Are Here Again," tunes learned from listening to phonograph records." P. 167.

Chapter Seven - Drums and Drama

"There is a tendency toward esthetic elaboration to the point of losing any utilitarian value. Women's hats illustrate this point in our culture. For the most part they no longer shade the eyes or protect the head....no one should regard them as filling any useful purpose other than attracting attention and supporting the millinery industry." P. 186.

"The degree to which the esthetic accomplishments of people can be employed in any Christian society depends very largely upon the attitudes of the indigenous Christians." P. 197.

Chapter Eight--Queer Sounds, Strange Grammars, and Unexpected Meanings

..."The Shilluks say that a person with 'a big heart' is stingy, while someone with a 'small heart' is generous." P. 207.

"The Quechua Indians in Bolivia who decided that the patron saint of a new missionary was 'Oh Boy!' were being very logical, for they heard this phrase in precisely the same contexts in which most people called upon their favorite saint." P. 210-211.

"....languages cannot be mastered until we have thoroughly murdered them." P. 222.

Chapter Nine - Old Customs and New Ways

"The Afuge of the Lake Nyassa region used to expose twins in a basket left at a road crossing. Now they carry the twins in a basket to the road and leave the basket but keep the twins." P. 233.

"Long practiced habits of thought and action combine with vested interests to make us emotionally rebellious toward change." P. 245.

"If cultures are to be changed effectively without boomeranging dislocations, functional substitutes are essential." P. 247.

Chapter Ten - New Solutions to Old Problems

"....successful missionary work inevitably reveals the correspondingly effective manner in which the missionaries were able to identify themselves with the people--'to be all things to all men'--and to communicate their message in terms which have meaning." P. 250.

"....salvation is not just for the 'soul' but for the whole man..." P. 255.

"Identification with the people is not attained by wearing a breechcloth, eating manioc and termites, or dwelling in a grass hut; what really counts is having a mind which can understand, hands which join with others in common tasks, and a heart which responds to others' joys and sorrows." P. 257.

"However, what is even more important than revised programs and new strategies is an all-embracing consciousness of the reality of God, the saving grace of Jesus Christ, the transforming work of the Spirit of God, and our own cultural inadequacy. The power of Jesus Christ working

through His consecrated and teachable servants can sanctify all of life to the glory of God." P. 266.

One of the most valuable features of this book for the missionary is the fact that only pertinent things are included. That is, there is no attempt to make it an exhaustive anthropological treatise with all the terms and trimmings. Yet, no major aspect of anthropology which is relevant to missions has been omitted.

Nida is uniquely qualified to write a book of this nature since he has worked with so many different missionaries and mission boards in so many countries and can draw on first hand information from all parts of the world. He reveals a good grasp of the content, aims and up-to-date literature of anthropology.

Through reading these pages the layman will get more of an idea of the problems a missionary is up against, the missionary will see his mistakes and then turn the page quickly and find that someone else has made even greater mistakes, and the missionary-to-be will certainly acquire an awareness of the problems, pitfalls, and challenges he faces. All will come to realize how important it is to have the right attitude--toward the Lord, themselves, and their fellow men--as they seek to win some for Christ.

In the reviewer's opinion Customs and Cultures is good reading for the general public, a challenge to the Christian, but a must for the missionary.

Mrs. Milton A. Gabler

Wycliffe Bible Translators
Sulphur Springs, Arkansas

LETTERS AND BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

The Tremolo and Evangelical Singing

Rubini died a hundred years ago. Yet every minute of every day and night the radio waves bring auditory evidence that he lived. Giovanni Battista Rubini is thought by many to have been the greatest tenor who ever lived. His successes included appearances in England and Russia. Opera was his vehicle of artistic expression, and in turn his matchless singing inspired some of the finest operatic writing of his time.

Opera plots are shot thru with strong emotions; love, jealousy, hatred, anger, fear, patriotism, intrigue. Rubini added to his great singing skill several vocal tricks to heighten the emotional level of the performance. His musical sob was very effective, and has been widely copied. Rubini found that he could further heighten the emotional intensity of a scene by forcing his voice to tremble. This emotional coloring, or discoloring, of the natural singing voice added to the illusion of this world of make-believe.

During the latter part of his life, Rubini's voice became uncontrolled so that he was unable to stop his voice from trembling. Had he been able to hear himself by means of a recording device, he would undoubtedly have retired years earlier. Unfortunately he kept on singing, and unfortunately he had many imitators. As with Caruso's imitators, the vocal faults were parroted and the great skills and musicianship were overlooked. Singers of the operatic stage sang with wobbling voices to express spurious emotion, or when there was no particular call for emotional display.

By the beginning of the twentieth century only a small percentage of the inhabitants of the so-called civilized world had ever heard a person sing with an intentional tremolo. People sang naturally, with the kind of voice God gave them. But early in the present century soloists and small concert groups commenced to appear in village "opera houses," and a small segment of rural America began to hear

"trained" singers. A few young people aped the tremolo of the professionals, but the oldsters continued to sing with straight tones, and most of the young people as well.

For a long time the tremolo was connected with professional and theatrical singers, and naturally was resisted by church musicians. It goes without saying that the use of vocal tremolo in the singing of Gregorian chants, Elizabethan madrigals, and motets, would be very bad taste. But gradually the tremolo spread into church music until it is widely accepted in the United States.

Some choir directors have stood firmly for the natural "straight" tone, since it is impossible for uncontrolled wobbling tones to blend together. The St. Olaf College Choir is a magnificent example of the possibilities of the natural singing voice.

If the vocal student develops his mind and his musicianship along with his voice, and then perfects a fast vibrato (six pulsations per second, or faster) the results should be pleasing. The Shaw Chorale is the finest example known to this writer of this kind of music study.

Unfortunately most singers do not employ the vibrato, but sing with a slow and wide tremolo. The slower the wobble, the wider the dip with each wobble, and the more inaccurate the singing. Singing lessons, all too often, consist in teaching the student to achieve a tremolo. So widespread has the Rubini mannerism become that many people now live who have never heard anyone sing with a straight tone. Many fine musicians habitually sing, hum, and whistle using an exaggerated tremolo, simple because everybody else is doing it.

The absolutely natural voice probably cannot be found anywhere on earth, since there are mannerisms in singing among all people, and the mannerisms of speech are bound to affect the vocal art. But among primitive people, and among those who have not been influenced by the radio, one consistently finds singing without tremolo. Experience

with aboriginals of Polynesia, Africa, Formosa, and the Americas leads to the conclusion that straight tones are the singing norm.

The missionary whose training or environment causes him to sing with a tremolo will be an oddity in a primitive society. He may become known as the man with the frightened voice, or the man with the nervous voice, or the man with the curly hair and the curly voice.

Such a missionary, and this may include most of them, may choose one of two courses of action. He may continue to sing with wobbling voice until he converts the natives to this unnatural, theatrical mode of singing. (The conversion may be a little difficult, since the elder citizens feel responsible for passing the native culture along intact to the next generation). Or he can get himself in hand and learn to sing with a straight voice, the way God made it in the first place.

Leon V. Metcalf
Director of Bands
Seattle Pacific College
Seattle, Washington

Difficulties of Relativism

To the Editor:

This is just a note which, while sounding critical, is not meant to be so taken.

A propos of your recent article on "Cultural Relativism" there is a fine paper by Frank Hartung, "Relativity and Moral Judgments" in Philosophy of Science, April, 1954.

I felt, being a philosopher, that in your article the difficulties in holding to any fundamental relativism were not sufficiently clarified as to show their logical untenability. The above mentioned paper does a fair job of revealing some more profound difficulties on Herskovits's

position than even Barnett crystallized. There is nothing new in it to either of us I expect, but it is well to recall to memory some fundamentals often overlooked by the eager anthropologist in his quest for a Weltanschauung.

You are doing a fine job, keep it up.

Harry Leith
Gordon College
30 Evans Way
Boston, Mass.

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NOTES AND NEWS

Wonderly at Southeastern Bible College

Daniel E. Wonderly, a graduate in anthropology from Wheaton College has been teaching at Southeastern Bible College in Birmingham, Alabama for two and one-half years. This year he is presenting an introductory course in anthropology.

Murk Family Arrives in Mexico

Jim and Donna Murk and their children, Bevy Jo and Billy Jim are in Mexico preparing for work with the Wycliffe Bible Translators in the Philippines. Jim holds advanced degrees in history and in anthropology. He has taught at Bob Jones University and at the Summer Institute of Linguistics at Grand Forks, North Dakota. The youngest member of the family, Billy Jim, arrived on January 15, one month after the Murks arrived in Mexico.

Lucas at Northwestern Seminary

Ray G. Lucas is writing on missions and acculturation in Africa for his thesis at Northwestern Schools Seminary in Minneapolis. During the first semester of this year Ray taught anthropology in the college at Northwestern.

Toronto Institute of Linguistics: Announcement

The Toronto Institute of Linguistics was formed in 1950 as a cooperative undertaking representing nine denominational and interdenominational missions and training schools having their headquarters in the Ontario Capitol. The facilities of the Canadian School of Missions have been made available to the Institute for a four weeks' summer course, whose dates this year are June 10 to July 8. A growing library of practical linguistic material is the property of the Institute and is available to students in course. The purpose of the Toronto Institute of Linguistics is to introduce the prospective missionary to applied linguistics, training him in some of the skills essential to the learning of a foreign language, and giving him some awareness of the cultural situation in which people speak and live. He may thus communicate more effectively in a language other than his own, with people whose patterns of living and thinking differ from his.

The Institute in no way competes with the Summer Institute of Linguistics, announced in the Jan.-Feb. issue of Practical Anthropology. It makes no attempt to teach the techniques of language analysis, which provide the major emphasis at the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Whereas the Summer Institute of Linguistics is designed to meet the needs of the missionary going to languages not yet reduced to writing, the Toronto Institute of Linguistics is simply aimed at the group which must learn any foreign language (anything from Japanese to Hausa) and needs to know how to start that difficult task.

This year's study will comprise a heavy dose of phonetics with extensive drill, an introduction to language

structure, some anthropology, and literacy problems and related matters of language and communication. Coordinating all this will be intensive practice in beginning the learning of Vietnamese and Aymara (a South American Indian language). This will provide practical know-how of actual language learning, gained from practical experience under close supervision with two vastly different languages. It is hoped that the "real live" experience in beginning the learning of two languages will enable the missionary to begin another language on the field with a minimum of innefficiency.

The faculty this year will include Ellen M. Ross, William A. Smalley, and (for four days of lecture) Dr. Eugene A. Nida. The fee of approximately $25.00 for the four weeks' intensive course is based on probable enrollment, travel expense for teachers, and costs to the Institute of technical books and other facilities made available to students in course. If savings can be made, these will be passed along to the students. The textbooks will cost approximately $3.00. Students are expected to find their own living accomodation, but special help will be given to any students from beyond Ontario.

The 1955 session of the Institute will begin on Friday, June 10th from 9 a.m., and will end on Friday, July 8th at noon. Classes will be held Monday through Friday with instruction arranged to concentrate on the morning hours with a brief period of study after lunch. There will be a morning break for chapel and coffee. Applications should be made in writing to the Secretary, Rev. T. R. Maxwell, M.A., M.Th., Toronto Bible College, 16 Spadina Road, Toronto 4, Ont., Canada. In accepting candidates, priority will be given to those who apply early and have negotiations in progress with mission boards or societies. Applicants are expected to arrange their finances in such a way as to give a maximum of time to the course. Those who find it necessary to be employed more than three hours a day (not including Saturday) will not be admitted (or continued).

--William A. Smalley

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(including late renewals)

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Mr. Marvin BREININGER; Wheaton College; Wheaton, Ill.
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Mr. George M. COWAN; Instituto Linguistico de Verano Heroes 53; Mexico 3, D. F.
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Mr. Fred DeVILBISS; Wheaton College; Wheaton, Ill.
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